

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A32**WASHINGTON POST
15 May 1986

Soviets Expel U.S. Diplomat

Spy Activities Alleged in Ouster

Associated Press

MOSCOW, May 14—The Soviet Union today announced that it had expelled a U.S. diplomat for allegedly spying with a CIA-recruited Soviet citizen. It was the second expulsion of an American diplomat in two months.

U.S. Embassy spokesman Jaroslav Verner said the diplomat, Erik Sites, left the Soviet Union on Saturday. He said Sites was a member of the staff of the U.S. military attache.

Following normal embassy policy, Verner refused to comment on the Soviet charges, made in a dispatch from the official Tass news agency.

In Washington, White House spokesman Larry Speakes confirmed that Sites had been expelled but also refused to discuss the spy charge.

"We do not comment on such allegations," Speakes said. Asked if the United States would retaliate by expelling a Soviet official, he said, "I don't have anything on that."

Sites' expulsion comes during a period of heightened U.S.-Soviet tensions caused by last month's U.S. air raids on Libya, delays in arrangements for a new superpower summit and strong Soviet attacks on U.S. arms control policy.

Tass, citing the KGB secret police, said Sites was "arrested in Moscow on May 7, when he had a secret meeting with a Soviet citizen recruited by the U.S. intelligence service."

"A big espionage action of U.S. secret services against the Soviet Union was thwarted," the English-language dispatch said. The wording was virtually identical to that of the March 14 announcement that U.S. Embassy Second Secretary Michael Sellers was being expelled.

Tass claimed evidence "obtained at the moment of arrest . . . and in the course of the investigation fully disclose his [Sites'] intelligence activities, incompatible with his official status."

It said Sites was declared *persona non grata* and that an investigation was underway "in the case of the agent of the American intelligence service," an apparent reference to the Soviet citizen, who was not named.

Verner said he did not know if Sites was a member of the military, and refused to say how long he had been in Moscow.

Sellers also was accused of spying and holding a clandestine meeting with a Soviet citizen. He was expelled a week after the United States angered the Soviet Union by ordering Soviet missions to the United Nations in New York cut from 279 people to 170 by April 1988.